

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method for use in creating an electronic design of a product intended for subsequent printing, the method comprising
making electronic map information available to a server computer system, the map information containing information covering a relatively large geographical area and being adapted to produce relatively high resolution maps,
in response to information received from a client computer system identifying a location within the relatively large geographical area, obtaining a relatively high resolution user map from the map information, the user map covering a relatively small geographical area that includes at least the identified location,
generating a lower resolution display map version of the user map, the display map being suitable for displaying at the client,
transmitting the display map to the client for displaying to the user,
receiving a description of an electronic product design from the client, the description identifying at least a portion of the display map, and
associating the identified portion of the display map with corresponding map information such that the product design will be printed using the higher resolution version of the display map.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing the obtained user map is stored at the server.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing the display version at the server.
4. The method of claim 3 further comprising retrieving the stored display version in response to a request from the user and transmitting the display version to the client computer system.

- 5 The method of claim 1 further comprising generating a thumbnail version of the display map and storing the thumbnail version at the server.
6. The method of claim 5 further comprising retrieving the stored thumbnail version in response to a request from the user and transmitting the thumbnail version to the client computer system for viewing by the user.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the user map is based on location information supplied by the user for the purpose of obtaining a map
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the user map is based on location information extracted from information previously supplied by the user for another purpose.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein the information received includes a zoom level to be used to obtain the user map.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic product design has a defined map area and wherein the user map is obtained from the map information at a height and width ratio that corresponds to the height to width ratio of the map area in the electronic product design.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic product design has a defined map area and wherein the display map is generated to have a height and width ratio that corresponds to the height to width ratio of the available map area in the electronic product design.
12. A computer-implemented method for use in creating an electronic design of a product intended for subsequent printing, the method comprising
supplying information to a server computer system having access to map information covering a relatively large geographical area and adapted to produce

relatively high resolution maps, the supplied information identifying at least a location within the relatively large geographical area,

receiving a display map from the server, the display map covering a relatively small geographical area that includes at least the identified location and being at a relatively low resolution suitable for displaying at the user computer,

incorporating at least a portion of the display map into an electronic product design, and

transmitting a description of the electronic product design to the server for subsequent printing of the product, the description identifying the incorporated portion of the display map such that the server can associate the received product design with a corresponding higher resolution map at the server.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising allowing the user to supply different information to the server such that a different display map will be received.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the different information is a different location.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the different information is a different zoom level.

16. The method of claim 12 further comprising displaying the display map with a user-controllable crop box such that the user can vary the portion of the display map incorporated into the electronic product design..

17. The method of claim 12 further comprising
requesting a display of one or more thumbnail map images stored on the server,
selecting one of the displayed thumbnail images, and
receiving a display map associated with the selected thumbnail images from the server.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising replacing the at least a portion of the received display map currently in the electronic product design with at least a portion of the received display map associated with a selected thumbnail image.

19. A computerized system for use in creating an electronic design of a product intended for subsequent printing, the system comprising

means for making electronic map information available to a server computer system, the map information containing information covering a relatively large geographical area and being adapted to produce relatively high resolution maps,

means, responsive to information received from a client computer system identifying a location within the relatively large geographical area, for obtaining a relatively high resolution user map from the map information, the user map covering a relatively small geographical area that includes at least the identified location,

means for generating a lower resolution display map version of the user map, the display map being suitable for displaying at the client,

means for transmitting the display map to the client for displaying to the user,

means for receiving a description of an electronic product design from the client, the description identifying at least a portion of the display map, and

means for associating the identified portion of the display map with corresponding map information such that the product design will be printed using the higher resolution version of the display map.

20. The system of claim 19 further comprising means for storing the obtained user map is stored at the server.

21. The system of claim 19 further comprising means for storing the display version at the server.

22. The system of claim 21 further comprising means for retrieving the stored display version in response to a request from the user and means for transmitting the display version to the client computer system.

23. The system of claim 19 further comprising means for generating a thumbnail version of the display map and means for storing the thumbnail version at the server.

24. The system of claim 23 further comprising means for retrieving the stored thumbnail version in response to a request from the user and means for transmitting the thumbnail version to the client computer system for viewing by the user.

25. The system of claim 19 wherein the user map is based on location information supplied by the user for the purpose of obtaining a map.

26. The system of claim 19 wherein the user map is based on location information extracted from information previously supplied by the user for another purpose.

27. The system of claim 19 wherein the information received includes a zoom level to be used to obtain the user map.

28. The system of claim 19 wherein the user map is obtained from the map information at a height and width ratio that corresponds to the height to width ratio of the available map area in the electronic product design.

29. The system of claim 19 wherein the display map is generated to have a height and width ratio that corresponds to the height to width ratio of the available map area in the electronic product design.

30. A computer-implemented system for use in creating an electronic design of a product intended for subsequent printing, the system comprising
means for supplying information to a server computer system having access to map information covering a relatively large geographical area and adapted to produce relatively high resolution maps, the supplied information identifying at least a location within the relatively large geographical area,

means for receiving a display map from the server, the display map covering a relatively small geographical area that includes at least the identified location and being at a relatively low resolution suitable for displaying at the user computer,

means for incorporating at least a portion of the display map into an electronic product design, and

means for transmitting a description of the electronic product design to the server for subsequent printing of the product, the description identifying the incorporated portion of the display map such that the server can associate the received product design with a corresponding higher resolution map at the server.

31. The system of claim 30 further comprising allowing the user to supply different information to the server such that a different display map will be received.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the different information is a different location.

33. The system of claim 31 wherein the different information is a different zoom level.

34. The system of claim 30 further comprising means for displaying the display map with a user-controllable crop box such that the user can vary the portion of the display map incorporated into the electronic product design..

35. The system of claim 30 further comprising

means for requesting a display of one or more thumbnail map images stored on the server,

means for selecting one of the displayed thumbnail images, and

means for receiving a display map associated with the selected thumbnail images from the server.

36. The system of claim 35 further comprising means for replacing the at least a portion of the received display map currently in the electronic product design with at least a portion of the received display map associated with a selected thumbnail image.